



## **Foam Core Shielding for Spacecraft**

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A foam core shield (FCS) system is now being developed to supplant multi-layer insulation (MLI) systems heretofore installed on spacecraft for thermal management and protection against meteoroid impacts. A typical FCS system consists of a core sandwiched between a face sheet and a back sheet. The core can consist of any of a variety of low-to-medium-density polymeric or inorganic foams chosen to satisfy application-spe-

cific requirements regarding heat transfer and temperature.

The face sheet serves to shock and thereby shatter incident meteoroids, and is coated on its outer surface to optimize its absorptance and emittance for regulation of temperature. The back sheet can be dimpled to minimize undesired thermal contact with the underlying spacecraft component and can be metallized on the surface

facing the component to optimize its absorptance and emittance. The FCS systems can perform better than do MLI systems, at lower mass and lower cost and with greater volumetric efficiency.

*This work was done by Marc Adams of Caltech for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. For more information, contact [iaoffice@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:iaoffice@jpl.nasa.gov). NPO-43066*

## **CHEM-Based Self-Deploying Planetary Storage Tanks**

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A document proposes self-deploying storage tanks, based on the cold elastic hibernated memory (CHEM) concept, to be used on remote planets. The CHEM concept, described in previous *NASA Tech Briefs* articles, involves the use of open-cell shape-memory-polymer (SMP) foam sandwich structures to make lightweight, space-deployable structures that can be compressed for storage and can later be expanded, then rigidified for use.

A tank according to the proposal would be made of multiple SMP layers

(of which at least one could be an SMP foam). The tank would be fabricated at full size in the rigid, deployed condition at ambient temperature, the SMP material(s) having been chosen so that ambient temperature would be below the SMP glass-transition temperature ( $T_g$ ). The tank would then be warmed to a temperature above  $T_g$ , where it would be compacted and packaged, then cooled to below  $T_g$  and kept there during launch and transport to a distant planet.

At the assigned position on the planet, the compacted tank would be heated above  $T_g$  by the solar radiation making it rebound to its original size and shape. Finally, the tank would be rigidified through natural cooling to below  $T_g$  in the planetary ambient environment.

*This work was done by Witold Sokolowski and Kaushik Bhattacharya of Caltech for NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Further information is contained in a TSP (see page 1). NPO-43479*

## **Sequestration of Single-Walled Carbon Nanotubes in a Polymer** **The nanotubes would be solubilized for incorporation into lightweight composites.**

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Sequestration of single-walled carbon nanotubes (SWCNs) in a suitably chosen polymer is under investigation as a means of promoting the dissolution of the nanotubes into epoxies. The purpose of this investigation is to make it possible to utilize SWCNs as the reinforcing fibers in strong, lightweight epoxy-matrix/carbon-fiber composite materials. SWCNs are especially attractive for use as reinforcing fibers because of their stiffness and strength-to-weight

ratio: Their Young's modulus has been calculated to be 1.2 TPa, their strength has been calculated to be as much as 100 times that of steel, and their mass density is only one-sixth that of steel.

Bare SWCNs cannot be incorporated directly into composite materials of the types envisioned because they are not soluble in epoxies. Heretofore, SWCNs have been rendered soluble by chemically attaching various molecular chains to them, but such chemical attachments

compromise their structural integrity.

In the method now under investigation, carbon nanotubes are sequestered in molecules of poly(m-phenylenevinylene-co-2,5-dioctyloxy-p-phenylenevinylene) [PmPV]. The strength of the carbon nanotubes is preserved because they are not chemically bonded to the PmPV. This method exploits the tendency of PmPV molecules to wrap themselves around carbon nanotubes: the wrapping occurs partly because there ex-